

Greens MLA Johnathan Davis allegedly pressured 17-year-old to keep quiet about sexual relationship

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Exclusive

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statement regarding serious allegations raised against Greens MLA Johnathan Davis.

A man who claims to have had a sexual relationship with Johnathan Davis while he was 17 says the Greens politician pressured him to keep it secret because "people would have opinions but we've done nothing wrong".

He says Mr Davis asked him to send him sexually explicit images and, at one point in their relationship, he had to crawl through the MLA's apartment after sex to avoid being seen on a video call with one of Mr Davis' colleagues.

The Canberra Times on Friday revealed the MLA had been stood down by his party over that matter, as well as a separate accusation Mr Davis had sex with a 15-year-old boy.

Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury on Friday said: "My office has not seen evidence of illegal activity, but we are reporting what we know of the complaints to police."

Both matters have been referred to the police. Mr Davis, through a lawyer, declined to comment on Saturday. He shut down his social media accounts on Friday.

The then-17-year-old, now 18, told the *Sunday Canberra Times* he came forward because he did not have faith Mr Rattenbury and other senior party figures would name Mr Davis publicly.



📷 Johnathan Davis has declined to comment on the allegations. Picture by Elesa Kurtz

"If the leader of the Greens won't, I will," the man said.

The then 17-year-old man said he met Mr Davis on Grindr, a gay dating app, in winter 2022, and began a sexual relationship that lasted until February 2023.

"We quickly switched over to Snapchat and in our first conversation there, I told Jonathan that I was a minor, freshly 17, to inform him before sleeping together or exchanging sexual photos. I asked him if that was alright," the man said in a written account of his relationship.

"Johnathan was not only alright with my age but he preferred it.

"He would later share with me that he primarily goes for 18- to 20-year-olds on Grindr, Tinder, Bumble, Twitter, Squirt, Hinge, etc, and that he sets his age preferences to the youngest possible parameters on any platform."

A relationship with a 17-year-old is not illegal, as the law allows a person of that age to consent, but is inconsistent with the expectations for a member of government, a point made clear by Chief Minister Andrew Barr's calls for Mr Davis to resign.

A person found guilty in the ACT of having sexual intercourse with a young person aged under 16 faces a jail term of up to 14 years.

After *The Canberra Times* revealed the allegations on Friday morning, Chief Minister Andrew Barr and Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry immediately called for Mr Davis' resignation.

The man, who was 17 when he first met Mr Davis, provided evidence of his relationship to the Greens after finding out the party had received a complaint about Mr Davis allegedly having sex with a 15-year-old. That person has not come forward.

The complaints have been referred to police, who confirmed no complaint had been made by a person alleging they had been a victim of Mr Davis.



Johnathan Davis has been stood down 'indefinitely' by the ACT Greens. Picture by Sitthixay Ditthavong

A lawyer acting for Mr Davis on Saturday said the politician had no comment to make in response to specific questions about the then 17-year-old man's allegations.

"He is unaware of the substance of the allegations made regarding his conduct, but understands from Mr Rattenbury's public statement that certain matters have been referred to police. Whilst those matters are being reviewed by police, it is inappropriate for Mr Davis, or others, to comment upon any allegations being made regarding his conduct," the lawyer said.

In February 2023, Mr Davis asked the then-17-year-old man in a Snapchat message how old he was.

"Even though I'm sure you told me, and it's just me being forgetful/paranoid, you were over 16 the first time we met right?" Mr Davis asked, in a message seen by the *Sunday Canberra Times*.

After the man assured Mr Davis he had been old enough - including referring to a photo of a COVID test result with his date of birth visible - the politician said he was "cool with it".

"One of those 'people would have opinions but we've done nothing wrong' vibes. I hope you've never had reason to question how into you I am," Mr Davis said.

He added: "A lot about you turns me on. The anxiety of people finding out doesn't. It actually makes me really anxious. I'm sure you understand that right? Sorry. I'm probably ruining the fantasy for you. But we've been talking for a while so I'm just being honest."

The man said he resorted to lying about being sick to avoid Mr Davis' advances, comparing it to "chucking a sickie" to avoid a shift.

"We alternated between Snapchat and Grindr and Johnathan was operating multiple accounts on either platform which enabled him to inundate me with messages," the man said.

"I felt like his soft plush doll trapped inside a claw machine; even when I managed to break free of his grasp, Johnathan reached out again and again and again and again to ensnare me once more."

The man said he had sex with Mr Davis twice before realising he was a politician, as Mr Davis had used the initials "JD" in his dating app profile. Once confirming his identity, the man said, Mr Davis pressed for secrecy and privacy.

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"I was flabbergasted once I found out and, initially, I believed it to be a coincidence. Perhaps there's another 30-something-year-old with the initials 'JD', I naively thought. Pure denial," the man said.

"I felt guilty about having potentially slept with a politician; I felt uniquely tainted; I felt as though I had tainted him, oddly responsible for his moral wrong."

"To an outsider, it may appear paradoxical to blame oneself; any rational thinker would recognise the ethics of the power imbalance."

The man said Mr Davis frequently viewed his Instagram stories from his official account during work hours and solicited intimate pictures.

The man said on one occasion he had been left humiliated and embarrassed after having sex with Mr Davis at his apartment, who then logged on to a work video call at home, while the man was still getting changed. The man said he had to crawl out of the apartment to avoid being seen on the video call.

"I vividly recall the panic I felt when I heard his chipper voice asking the colleague how she was going before he apologised to her for his dishevelled appearance. 'Forgive me, I've just gotten out of bed,' he [joked]," the man said.

"I stood there in his bathroom, phoneless, clothesless, and waited a few minutes before I decided to enter the lounge room and risk it; I crawled around like a baby to pick up my belongings from his floor to subtly leave his place.

"On my walk from his place, I was speechless.

"It was one of the first times I've walked without music playing; nothing could distract me from the humiliation and embarrassment I had felt."

Support is available for those who may be distressed. Phone Lifeline 13 11 14; Mensline 1300 789 978; Kids Helpline 1800 551 800; beyondblue 1300 224 636; 1800-RESPECT 1800 737 732.

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